



Town of Garner NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Credit Rating Affirms Garner's Economic Strength

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has assigned its "AA+" credit rating to the Town of Garner's 2015 general obligation (GO) bonds and affirmed that same rating for the Town's outstanding GO bonds. S&P also said the Town's outlook is stable.

"We believe the Town's conservative budgeting practices, aided by strong management conditions, will help maintain strong budgetary performance," S&P said. "Garner's strong economic profile, with access to and participation in the deep, diverse Raleigh [metropolitan statistical area], lends additional rating stability."

S&P said job opportunities in metropolitan Raleigh and the nearby Research Triangle Park "have fueled expansion of Garner's population and tax base." The credit rating firm also noted recent developments in town, such as the construction of North Carolina's first Cabela's, which is due to open next month.

S&P said its rating reflected the Town's strengths in numerous areas including 1) budget flexibility, with reserves in excess of 75 percent of general fund reserves; 2) budgetary performance, with surpluses in each of the past three fiscal years and 3) liquidity, with very strong cash to cover debt service and expenditures. S&P also cited the Town's "good financial policies" and "very strong institutional framework."

"We are very happy with S&P's most recent credit rating," Town Manager Hardin Watkins said. "Great things are happening in Garner, and it is refreshing to see external analysts confirm and acknowledge the hard work done by our outstanding elected officials and staff team."

Noting Garner's progress and its position in the booming Triangle, Watkins added, "Our local economy is strong, and we have plans to help make it even stronger."

The S&P credit rating comes ahead of a \$14.67 million GO bond issuance by the Town on or around

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March 17. The issuance is part of a \$35.7 million bond program approved overwhelmingly by Garner voters in March 2013. Last year, the Town issued approximately \$9.8 million in bonds.

The bonds are being used to fund numerous projects, including construction of a new police station at 912 Seventh Ave., a new Town Hall on the existing Town Hall campus at 900 Seventh Ave. and an indoor recreation center at the corner of Main and Montague streets in historic downtown Garner. The bonds will also pay for other needs such as road improvements and new sidewalks in various parts of town.

For detailed information on the Garner bond program, including project status updates, please visit garnerbonds.com.

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